

Dairy Farmers To Have New Mastitis Control Tool

UNIVERSITY PARK, (Centre Co.) — Pennsylvania dairy farmers will soon have a new tool to help control mastitis, the costliest disease of dairy cattle. A computerized expert system developed at Penn State will be field-tested over the next several months and may be available statewide as early as next year.

Mastitis is the most expensive cow health problem in the dairy industry according to Dr. William Heald, professor of dairy and animal science. "By cutting milk production, ruining udder tissue and even killing cows, the disease causes estimated annual losses of \$200 per cow. That's a loss of about \$2 billion in North America every year," he said.

Developed by Heald and other researchers in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, the system can help dairy producers minimize herd udder health problems. Dairy consultants can use it to help their clients develop more effective control programs.

"Having a computerized masti-

tis knowledge base should help reduce financial losses due to mastitis and improve the quality of milk marketed by Pennsylvania dairy farmers," said Heald.

You don't need to be a computer expert to use the program, either. "We designed it to be user-friendly, so it requires minimal computer skills," said Heald. "Most of the program's functions are controlled by pointing and clicking with a cursor."

Over the next several months, Heald will be sharing the program with veterinarians, DHIA officials, cooperative extension agents and dairy farmers in the southeastern part of the state. Their feedback will be used to develop a final version of the program.

The program helps farmers design mastitis control schemes based on various degrees of aggressive treatment. "The system can't diagnose the disease in cows, but it can help producers identify problems that might be contributing to mastitis on their farms,"

Heald said. "It can then suggest specific strategies to reduce mastitis problems in the herd."

The system incorporates information about identifying and controlling mastitis problems from a wide range of sources. The program's 170 screens are interlinked, so by pointing and clicking users can easily retrieve information on specific mastitis topics they select. The screens include text, pictures of laboratory cultures and graphical data.

The system targets problems

on individual farms by analyzing data from Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) mainframe computers. "It can retrieve data for individual cows or the whole herd, show all the related information and suggest possible mastitis management lapses," Heald said. "Users can download a herd's DHIA records using a modem and evaluate them automatically, saving time and effort."

The system analyzes somatic cell score (SCS) data as well as general herd management infor-

mation. "It also shows SCS trends and identifies cows with the highest SCS in current and previous months," said Heald.

Michael Foster, director of the college's Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence Applications, and dairy science project assistants Tai-Oun Kim and Joan Cooper helped develop the system, along with Patricia Toretti, senior programmer for Pennsylvania DHIA. The researchers will continue to refine the system using comments and feedback from people who field-test it this year.

State Approves Farmland Purchases

HARRISBURG, (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Agricultural Land Preservation Board approved easement purchases for seven farms in four counties, ensuring that 1,159 acres of prime farmland will remain in agricultural use.

"These farms will join over 460 others that are a part of the Farmland Preservation Program," said State Agriculture Secretary and Board Chairman Boyd E. Wolff. "Pennsylvania, with over

57,000 preserved acres, is second in the nation.

Following are the properties approved, listed by county, owner, township, acreage and purchase cost:

- Chester—Mary F. Porter, East Nottingham Township, 176 acres, \$450,944.

- Chester—Linda Rice, Highland Township, 113 acres \$397,408.

- Dauphin—Mary L. Boyer, Washington and Upper Paxton

Townships, 80 acres, \$120,600.

- Dauphin—Allen Shaffer, Upper Paxton Township, 100 acres, \$120,048.

- Northampton—Gordon J. and Armell D. Mann, Allen Township, 321 acres, \$1,026,627.

- York—Brian and Dorothy Grimm, Peach Bottom Township, 243 acres, \$234,708.

- York—Mahlon and Beverly Martin, Codorus and North Codorus townships, 126 acres, \$164,675.

TOP PRICES FOR ALL TYPES OF BEEF CATTLE CULL COWS, BULLS, STEERS, also Down or Crippled Cattle

MULVANEY LIVESTOCK SERVICES



Tom Mulvaney,
Easton, PA



610-258-1670

1-800-789-COWS (2697)

Calls Taken 6 AM to 10 PM - 7 Days A Week

IN PA - Northampton, Lehigh, Berks, Lancaster and parts of Chester & Lebanon Counties

★ All Cattle Paid on Hanging Dressed Weight ★

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR CORN & SOYBEAN

- We Deal In Futures And Options
- Our Only Business is Commodity Futures And Options
- Same Location And Principals For Over 20 Years
- When Buying options, your risk is limited to the loss of the premium paid plus all transaction costs. Buying futures and options have inherent risks and should be done only with risk capital.

FOR INFORMATION...LITERATURE...
CHARTS...PLEASE CALL

215-821-8111 800-543-8939

LEHIGH VALLEY FUTURES INC.

Suite LL6, 2200 Hamilton St., Allentown, PA 18104

The risk of loss in trading futures and options on futures can be substantial. futures and options trading may not be suitable for everyone. You should carefully consider the risks in light of your financial condition in deciding whether to trade.

Horst's Farmers Market

(Lebanon Produce Auction)

Serving Lebanon & Surrounding Counties

Fruit & Produce Auction

NEW HOURS

Wednesdays & Fridays

3 P.M.

HAY, STRAW & GRAIN AUCTION

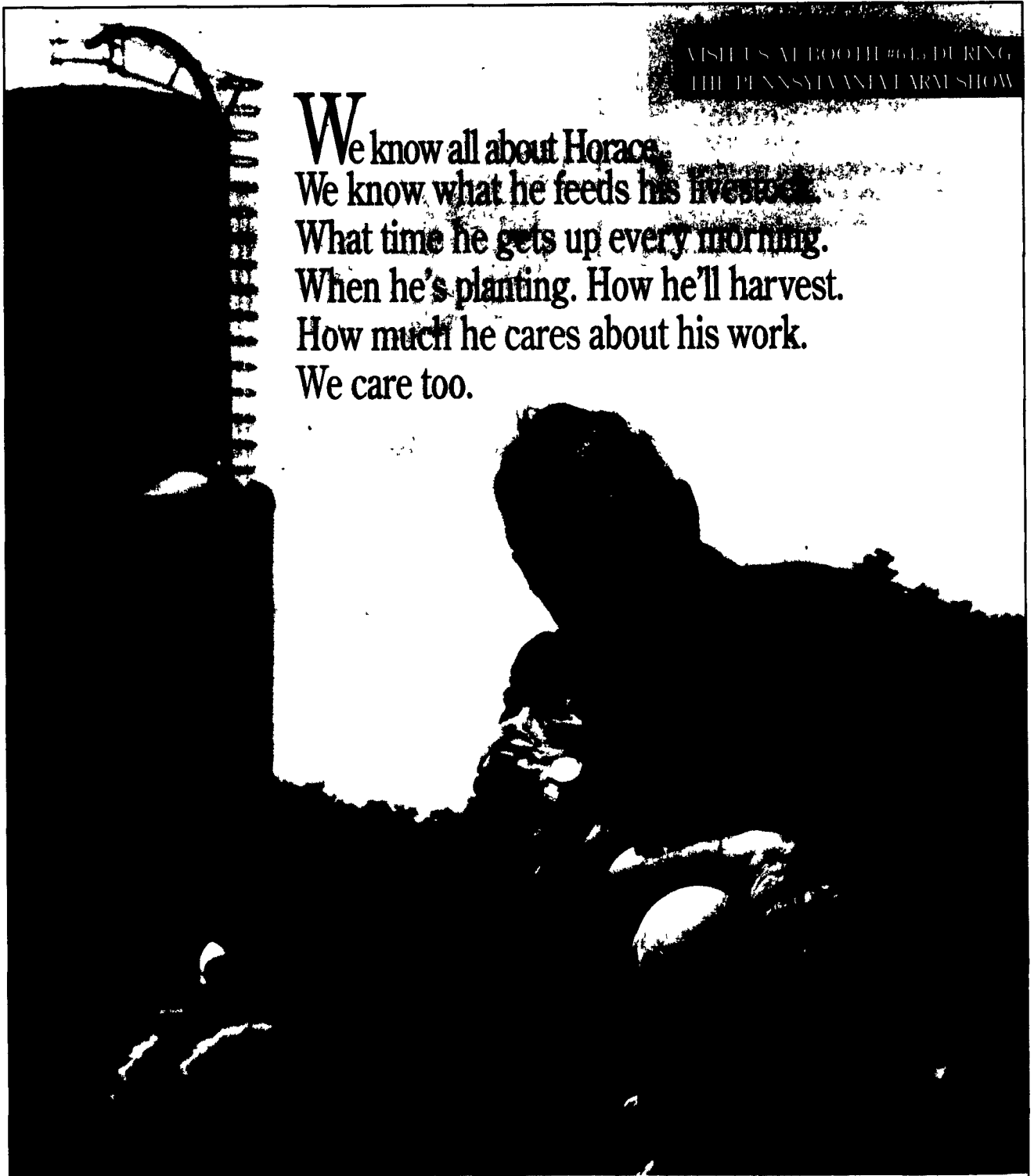
Every Friday at 1:30 PM

Located 3 miles North of Lebanon, Pa
along Route 72

Wilmer Hoover
(717)367-8379

Paul N. Horst
(717)274-0762

Nelson L. Ebersole, Auct. #001307-L
David L. Ebersole, Auct. #000246-L



WE know all about Horace.
We know what he feeds his livestock.
What time he gets up every morning.
When he's planting. How he'll harvest.
How much he cares about his work.
We care too.

Old Guard Insurance has been insuring farmers just like Horace for almost a century, and no one knows as well as we do how much hard work goes into a farm. Or how devastating a property or liability loss can be. That's why we offer experienced professionals to service your policy — real people who know farmers and farms.

Give Old Guard a call at 1-800-732-0050 for information on professional insurance agents near you.

 **Old Guard**
INSURANCE GROUP
2929 Litz Pike, P.O. Box 3010,
Lancaster, PA 17604